



The Weekly Page

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Pages Learn About Legislature

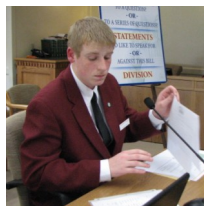


Mock committees debate bills

Pages worked individually or in small groups to research and write bills designed to address issues which were relevant to them and the state. They had their choice of working up a social bill or a fiscal bill to present in a mock committee hearing on Thursday. Students spent a day either researching social problems or playing the “Ax and Tax” budget game to get information for constructing their bills. They used class templates to transfer the information and their proposed solutions to a very real-looking House or Senate bill. Pages read their bills and “committee members,” governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure, debated the pros and cons of the proposals. A “DO PASS” or “DO NOT PASS” recommendation was then voted upon, allowing a bill to continue on in the legislative process. As in the real political system, some bills died in committee.

Death sentence needs DNA evidence

Olympia – Senate Bill 5280 was introduced yesterday by Senator Kenny Logue. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will prevent the execution of innocent people,” said Sen. Logue. Some innocents end up on death row due to bad legal representation by lawyers who have never tried a capital case or who show up in court intoxicated. Others are wrongfully convicted



by mistaken or corrupt witnesses or for lack of DNA evidence. With this bill, the legislature is requiring that all criminals sentenced to death have indisputable DNA evidence presented against them. If there is no DNA evidence, the most severe punishment they could receive would be life in prison without the possibility of parole.

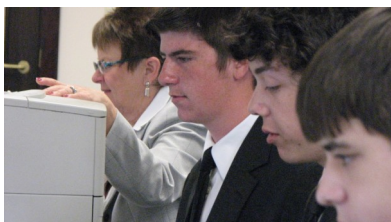
Bill softens vaccination requirement



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Marshall Montgomery introduced Senate Bill 7999, which addresses the issue of vaccinations. “The bill is a good one because it will honor the personal rights of families in Washington,” said Sen. Montgomery. Vaccinations can have harmful side effects. American children have been getting sick and regressing physically, mentally and emotionally after rounds of vaccinations. In the past two decades, the number has tripled for highly vaccinated children who are now chronically ill, disabled and suffering with learning disabilities, ADHD, asthma, diabetes and autism. This bill will allow families to waive the requirement to vaccinate their children before entering public school. Doctors must make parents aware of both the risks and benefits in administering vaccinations, and parents must sign off on that discussion in the doctor’s office. “Some children’s bodies just can’t handle the onslaught of the multiple doses of vaccines,” said Sen. Montgomery.

Big ideas in government

Throughout the week pages grappled with understanding the three “big ideas” for a representative government: **governing society is a complex process, successful democracies rely on responsible citizens, and government affects our life every day.** As they participated in daily discussions, listened to guest speakers, and proposed bills in mock committee hearings, their understanding around the concepts deepened. On Friday, they wrote about one of the big ideas to demonstrate the depth of their new knowledge.



Intelligent students need a variety of viewpoints in science classes

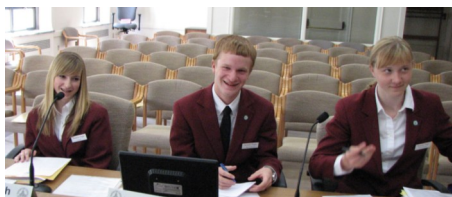


Olympia – House Bill 1576 was introduced yesterday by Representative Adam Kinkley. “This bill addresses the issue of teaching evolution in public schools and will inform students of many views on the origin of life in science classes so they can make their own informed decisions,” said Rep. Kinkley. This bill would require teachers to teach both the

Theory of Intelligent Design and the Theory of Evolution in the classroom. The school boards of each school district would be responsible for enforcing this law, but state officials could fine the districts if they don’t see evidence of the state-provided curriculum. “A web site will provide the necessary curriculum to teachers, eliminating the need for expensive textbook revisions,” said Rep. Kinkley. “This plan will give students many sides to consider before making their own mind up about how life began,” he said.

Senate calls for tough solutions to offset budget shortfall

Olympia—Yesterday, the Senate Ways and Means Committee heard testimony from Senators Max Dowd, Jonathon Cookston, Stephanie Granger,



Ali Smith, Chloe Hatfield, Heather Seaman, Jonathan Peterson and Marcus Storvick regarding the projected revenue shortfall

for the 2009-2011 biennium and the suggested remedies to balance the state operating budget. “We are in a terrible economic crisis, the worst we’ve seen in decades,” said Sen. Seaman.

Although many legislators had made campaign promises not to raise taxes, the members saw a need to make up for lost revenue by increasing

taxes on liquor, cigarettes, soda, bottled water, candy and gum and beauty services. “Increasing the cigarette tax by 50 cents a



pack will be very effective because there are many consumers who have an ever-lasting loyalty to the particular product. Cigarettes are not a necessity. The state will earn \$206 million with this tax,” said Sen. Granger. A good number of senators felt that cutting services was necessary, too. “We need to eliminate health coverage for illegal immigrant children,” said Sen. Seaman. “These families and their children can be given health care by charity organizations, but it should not be provided by the government whose laws they have already broken.” Goods and services was an area where Sen. Dowd felt cuts could be made. “Right now there are many supplies that are being wasted in offices everywhere, especially here in Olympia. If instead of passing out hard copies to everyone, the bills were just brought up via the computers, the government would be on its way to balancing the budget. This will bring in \$200 million,” said Sen. Dowd. Completely eliminating some offices



was a suggestion made by Sen. Smith.

“Eliminating customer service staff in the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife’s regional offices will save \$1.7 million,”

she said. “The public can purchase hunting and fishing licenses from private vendors just as easily as from a government office.” No class size reductions and a reduction in the state arts program, as well as forgoing raises for state workers rounded out the budget package. These would be temporary measures for the next biennium and could be reinstated when the economy revives. The current economic forecast predicts over \$9 billion in lost revenue for the next two years. “We are going to have to make serious sacrifices if we want to turn things around,” said Sen. Peterson.

Drive hammered, get nailed

Olympia – House Bill 2743 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Addison Doering and Detrix Custodio. “This bill addresses the issue of drunk driving and will reduce traffic accident deaths that could have easily been avoided,” said Rep. Doering.

The new law will increase the fine for a DUI. After a second drunk driving arrest, the offender will get up to 30 days of jail time. Subsequent drunk driving arrests would result in the installation of an ignition interlock device that would prevent a car from starting when a driver blows into it and it detect alcohol on the breath. The cost of the device would be paid for by the offender. “It is estimated that drunk driving is reduced by over 60 percent with the interlock devices,” said Rep. Custodio.

Healthier children is Rep. Webber's goal

Olympia – Yesterday, Representative Lindsay Webber introduced House Bill 2416, which addresses the issue of childhood obesity. “The bill is a good one because it will improve the health of children in our state,” said Rep.

Webber. If this bill becomes law, the legislature will require public schools to have daily physical education for at least 30-45 minutes and will also limit the amount of junk food in vending machines by including healthy options. From 2003-2006, obesity in children from 12-19 years of age increased by 5-17.6 percent. “This is unacceptable,” said Rep. Webber. “Our children will avoid diseases like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol if we take action now to help them make better lifestyle choices,” she said.

State considers legalization of marijuana



Olympia – House Bill 1994 was introduced yesterday by Representatives ShiQuise Moore and Adam Makoviney. “This bill addresses the issue of legalizing marijuana and will save state

money spent on enforcing drug laws and increase tax revenues,” said Rep. Moore. This bill allows marijuana to be sold in single gram quantities to citizens over the age of 25.

“Decriminalizing the drug could bring in an estimated \$6.2 billion in taxes if the sale is controlled by the government,” said Rep. Makoviney. Marijuana is America’s number one cash crop, and in 2006 an estimated \$35.8 billion worth of marijuana was produced in the United States.

Stomping out sleep deprivation



Olympia – Yesterday, Senator Amanda Grant and Representative Sarah Foster introduced Senate Bill 6012, which addresses the issue of school start times. “The bill is a

good one because it prevents and reduces health problems and interference with learning, which happens to teenagers as a result of sleep deprivation,” said Rep. Foster. The bill would push back school start and end times by an hour for schools which start at 7:30 a.m. or earlier. Students themselves have expressed that they are less tired, are more focused, get better grades, and are more alert during the day when they have a later school start time, since it fits their biological clock and makes them more rested. Minneapolis School District's switch from an earlier start time to a later one for a National Sleep Foundation study resulted in findings, such as heightened test scores, which were terrific indicators of how much benefit there may be to aligning school start times with the biological sleep patterns of teens.

Second-hand smoke in vehicles addressed

Olympia – House Bill 3456 was introduced yesterday by Representatives Eric Eisenbarth and Dean Atkinson.

“This bill addresses the issue of second hand smoke while driving and will improve the health of minors around the state of Washington,” said Rep. Eisenbarth. If the bill does become a law, the legislature will prohibit smoking in all transportation vehicles with passengers under the age of 21.



Sexualized advertisements to be eliminated in state

Olympia – Senate Bill 6121 was introduced yesterday by Senator Rachel Garner. “This bill addresses the issue of sexuality in the media and will create a more wholesome environment for teens to grow up in,” said Sen. Garner. This bill will eliminate sexually provocative or themed non-electronic advertising from the state such as bulletins, billboards, fliers, posters and window displays. “Our objective is to prevent girls from being immersed in a hyper-sexualized environment,” said Sen. Garner. “This should eliminate the lower self-esteem, lower achievement scores and higher rates of depression found when teens are exposed to these corrupting displays,” she said.



“Dropout factories” to close

Olympia – Senate Bill 6262 was introduced yesterday by Senator Emmett Fraser. “This bill addresses the issue of high school dropout rates and will ensure that more students graduate,” said Sen. Fraser. Too many students are dropping out of high school. Many students drop out of school for various reasons, such as violent home situations involving abusive parents or drug use. This bill will require all high schools with a dropout rate of 40 percent or higher to create alternative classes for struggling students. “If they get the help they need and begin to feel more successful, I think they may just decide to stay in school,” said Sen. Fraser.



Juveniles are not adults

Olympia – Senate Bill 6424 was introduced yesterday by Senators Alisa Feliciano and Nichole Schroeder. “This bill addresses the issue of juvenile criminal punishment and will create a more fair and safe environment for our youth to learn from their mistakes,” said Sen. Feliciano. The bill prohibits any minor from being charged and tried as an adult for a crime he or she commits. “This will save the state money because it is less costly to house a young offender in a juvenile jail rather than an adult



prison,” said Sen. Feliciano. Recent studies show that because the brain of juveniles, particularly the frontal lobes, are not fully developed, youths lack the ability to perform critical adult functions such as plan, anticipate consequences, control impulses, and be able to stand for themselves in court.

Cutting costs and capital punishment

Olympia – Senate Bill 6428 was introduced yesterday by Senators Billy Birge, Mariah Florez, and Randy Fishman. “This bill addresses the issue of the death penalty and will reduce the cost to the state



for sentencing inmates to death,” said Sen. Fishman. The bill will abolish the death penalty, leaving inmates who would normally be sentenced to death to life imprisonment and reducing the cost to the public a significant amount. According to a study released in Tennessee, death penalty trials are 48 percent more costly than trials in which a prosecutor seeks life without parole. “The additional cost of confining an inmate to death row, as compared to the maximum security prisons where those sentenced to life without parole, is as high as \$90,000 in some states,” said Sen. Florez. Currently, Washington has nine inmates on death row, which could cost the state up to an additional \$810,000 per year.



Legislature tackles teen drinking

Olympia – Senate Bill 6481 was introduced yesterday by Senator Chloe Glunt and Representative Cheyenne Wong. “This bill addresses the issue of underage drinking and will make sure teens aren’t illegally obtaining alcohol,” said Rep. Wong. In surveys, nearly 80 percent of high school seniors admit to trying alcohol at least once, and 50 percent report having consumed alcohol during the last month. Also, about 3,500 deaths per year are caused by drinkers under the age of 21. This bill will require public places that serve alcohol to card anyone who looks too young to drink.



New license requirements for old folks



Olympia – Yesterday, Representatives Aaron Roper, Taylor Lange, and Brandon Miller introduced House Bill 3333, which addresses the issue of elderly drivers. “The bill is a good one because it will prevent accidents in

Washington state, and this will save lives, vehicles, and personal property,” said Rep. Lange. The bill hopes to reduce the number of fatalities due to elderly drivers and will require all persons over the age of 70 to renew their driver’s license every three years. “They will be given a driver’s test just like the one given to teens trying to get their first license,” said Rep. Lange. Also, the elderly driver must present a doctor’s verification stating they are fit to drive, both physically and mentally.

House budget includes cuts and taxes

Olympia—Yesterday, Representatives Katie Stringfellow, Andrew Garon, Sean Jankovic, Kelby Hawthorne, Dominick DeSimone and Kimmie Stringfellow met with the House Ways and Means Committee to pound out hard solutions to a serious budget shortfall predicted for the next biennium. “There just doesn’t seem to be any way around raising some taxes,” said Rep. Garon. Among the items slated for revenue increases were alcohol, prescription drugs, cigarettes, movies, concerts and sporting events and the sales tax. Representatives did not believe that the modest taxes would impact state citizens that much. Several of the taxes, such as cigarettes, liquor and entertainment, are considered luxuries and people could do without them if the cost was prohibitive, they reasoned. Some, like the sales tax, would only be temporary until the state’s economy is back on its feet. Representative Hawthorne favored making cuts to education by eliminating



teacher training days, forgoing school and state workers’ raises and cutting the funds to reduce class size by 40 percent. “As we face this enormous deficit of our own creation, it is imprudent for our workers to be expecting a

raise of this magnitude while equally productive members of other industries suffer from job losses and benefit reductions,” he said. Other cuts included reducing the Governor and Lt.

Governor’s bodyguards by 50 percent. “No matter what you think of the governor, saving \$1.3 million of tax payers’ money is fine justification for reducing their personal bodyguard funding. They do not get death or blackmail threats, and don’t forget about the other \$1.3 million that would still be given to the cause of keeping them safe,” said Rep. Jankovic. Although an unpopular tax, Rep. DeSimone felt that property taxes could be increased by 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. “Those who have expensive homes can afford to pay more than those who have modest homes, so this is fair. The poorer section of our society will not have to pay this tax as



they don’t usually own property,” he said. Rep. Katie Stringfellow advocated reducing state employee benefit payments. “By having employees pay 25 percent of their health care costs, we could save \$200 million. Local businesses can’t afford to pay all of their workers’ health care, and neither can government. Many of our citizens don’t even have health care, so government workers should feel grateful for the 75 percent we will be paying for them,” she said. “Let’s face it, we need to cut our services down to the bare bones in this weak economy,” said Rep. Kimmie Stringfellow. “And there will definitely have to be a few taxes raised to balance this biennium’s budget. We are all going to have to tighten our belts and suffer some uncomfortable situations until we fix this problem.” The House is set to adjourn on April 26.

Guest speakers visit Page School



Senate intern Katherine Hinderlie, contract lobbyist Steve Linstrom, Rep. Dan Roach (R-31st) and Attorney General Rob McKenna joined the pages during classes on Wednesday. The speakers talked about what led them to their current positions and shared insightful information about their jobs and the issues they are currently working on.

Pages were able to inter-

act with these guests by asking questions and sharing their own views in response to the speaker’s questions.

Teachers passionate about civic education



The Washington State Legislature's 2009 Page School employs teachers Judi Orr, a certificated teacher, and Matt Kreiling, former Legislative intern and lobbyist. Judi is a retired social studies and English teacher who taught for over 35 years in the Clover Park School District, and Matt lobbied for the Washington Student Lobby representing college students throughout Washington. "I really enjoy facilitating learning and watching those light bulbs go off each week," said Matt, as he introduced himself on Monday. Both teachers enjoyed meeting



so many students from all parts of Washington and teaching them more about how state government functions.

Jeopardy game highly competitive

On Friday pages tested their knowledge of the Legislative process in a spirited game of *Jeopardy*. Winning teams were comprised of individuals who had learned the most during their week in Page School and were awarded certificates and brightly colored stickers that they wore proudly for the rest of the day.

Page program over 100 years old



The Legislative page program has been in existence since 1891. This photo is of pages who served in past years. The first female page served in 1937. In the past, pages were required to do ironing and cleaning for members. Page duties today are much more professional..

Sine Die and goodbye!

At the rear of both chambers of the legislative building are massive double doors. When opened wide, the presiding officers on the respective rostrums can see one another across the rotunda. It is a long-standing tradition that the final act of the legislative session occurs when the two officers simultaneously bang their gavels and announce they are now adjourned *sine die*; that is, without setting a time to reconvene.

On Sunday, after 105 days, the first session of the 61st Legislative biennium will end. Over 2,000 bills were introduced in the two chambers, but only about 15-20 percent will actually become laws. Pages got a first-hand look at how parliamentary procedure is used by legislators on the floor of each chamber as they delivered documents, listened to their legislators express their views and watched the voting process. The last bills to be passed will be sent to the Governor for her signature after the session's end on April 26.

Page School on the web

The Page School has its own web site. You can find us at:

www1.leg.wa.gov/WorkingwithLeg/PageSchool/. This newsletter has been posted there.

